

Box 67

WAR DEPARTMENT,
SURGEON GENERAL'S OFFICE,

Washington, D. C., April 28, 1883.

With deep regret the death of Brigadier and Brevet Major General Joseph K. Barnes, Surgeon General, U. S. Army, (retired), which occurred at his residence in Washington, D. C., April 5, 1883, is announced to the Officers of the Medical Department of the Army.

General Barnes was born in Philadelphia, Pa., July 21, 1817. His father, Judge Joseph Barnes, originally from New England, was a prominent lawyer and citizen of Philadelphia, and for many years held the position of President Judge of the District Court for the City and County of Philadelphia.

His early academic education was received at the celebrated Round Hill School at Northampton, Mass., established by Mr. George Bancroft and Joshua Green Cogswell, in 1830.

He entered upon a collegiate course at Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., but owing to failing health was obliged to withdraw before graduation. He began his medical studies under the supervision of Dr. Thomas Harris of the Navy, (subsequently Surgeon General of the Navy), and graduated at the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania in the spring of 1838.

After graduation he served for one year as one of the resident physicians at Blockley Hospital, Philadelphia, and one year as outdoor physician for the N. W. District of Philadelphia.

June 12, 1840, he passed a very creditable examination before the Army Medical Examining Board, then in session in Philadelphia, and on the same day was appointed, and on June 15, 1840, was commissioned an Assistant Surgeon, U. S. Army.

The late distinguished Doctor William H. Van Buren was also a member of this class.

After a short term of duty of five months at the U. S. Military Academy, West Point, he was ordered, November, 19, 1840, to accompany a detachment of recruits en route for Florida, then the field of active military operations against the Seminole and Creek Indians.

From the date of his arrival in Florida until July 15, 1843, he was actively and laboriously engaged in field and Post service; among other duties he accompanied General (then Colonel) W. S. Harney on his expedition through the Everglades.

During his service in Florida he was stationed at Forts Pleasant, Vose, Hamilton, Noel, Stansberry, Poinsett and Brooke, and at Key West Barracks; not infrequently he was obliged to attend two or more posts, owing to the scarcity of medical officers.

On October 15, 1843, he was assigned to duty at Fort Jesup, La., continuing on duty at that Post until February 18, 1846, when he accompanied the Second Dragoons to Corpus Christi, Texas, to join the "Army of Occupation," then organizing on the Mexican frontier. He participated in all the movements and battles of the Army invading Mexico, under the command of General Taylor, except that of Buena Vista. In March, 1847, he was transferred with General Worth's command to Vera Cruz, arriving there in time to be present at the siege and capitulation of that city, (March 9-29, 1847). In the affair at the Madeline river, near Vera Cruz, March 27, 1847, he received the especial thanks of Colonel W. S. Harney for his services on that occasion.

Accompanying General Scott's command as Chief Medical Officer of the Cavalry Brigade, he was present and rendered distinguished service at the battles of Cerro Gordo, Contreras, Cherubusco, Molino del Rey, the storming of Chapultepec and the capture of the City of Mexico, September 14, 1847.

In his report after the battle of Molino del Rey, Major E. V. Sumner, commanding the Dragoons, makes the following reference:—"I have also to state that Assistant Surgeon Barnes was very assiduous in his duties and took such measures that our wounded men received prompt attention."

On January 11, 1848, he was ordered to return to the United States and report by letter to the Surgeon General.

From February 16, 1848, to November 1, 1848, he was on duty at Baton Rouge, La., in charge of a General Hospital, and at East Pascagoula, La.; from the latter place he accompanied the 2d U. S. Dragoons to Texas, reaching Austin, Tex., November 24, 1848.

From this date until September 30, 1850, he served at Fort Croghan and other posts and in the field in Texas, when he reported under orders to the Surgeon General at Washington, D. C., and was assigned to duty October 22, 1850, at Baltimore, Md., examining recruits and as Post Surgeon at Fort McHenry.

On March 26, 1851, he was ordered to Fort Scott, Mo., where he served until July 5, 1852; he was then assigned to duty at Fort Leavenworth, Kans.

On May 2, 1853, he was ordered to accompany troops to the new post on the Kansas River, then called "Camp Centre"—now Fort Riley—where he remained on duty as Post Surgeon until October 20, 1853, when he proceeded to Philadelphia and reported by letter to the Surgeon General: in which place he was examined for promotion December 16, 1853.

On December 20, 1853, he was assigned to duty at the U. S. Military Academy, West Point, N. Y. On August 29, 1856, he received his promotion and appointment as Major and Surgeon.

He was relieved from duty at West Point, June 1, 1857, and ordered to the Department of the Pacific. He arrived at Headquarters Department of the Pacific, July 16, 1857, and was assigned to duty in San Francisco, where he remained until September 12, 1857.

On September 19, 1857, he entered upon his duties as Post Surgeon at Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, at the same time attending Fort Cascades.

From October 27, 1858, until July 5, 1860, he was on duty as Medical Director of the Department of Oregon.

On July 5, 1860, he was ordered to accompany General W. S. Harney to Washington, D. C., which order having been complied with, he returned to Fort Vancouver, where he continued as Medical Director, Department of Oregon, until the merging of the Departments of Oregon and California, in the early part of January, 1861. He remained on duty at Fort Vancouver as Post Surgeon until June 20, 1861, when he proceeded to New York City and reported in person at the Headquarters of the Army in compliance with orders from the War Department.

On August 22, 1861, he was ordered to report for duty to Major General David Hunter, whom he accompanied to Jefferson City, Mo., as Medical Director of his command; he served as Medical Director of the Western Department and Department of Kansas, also, in the Department of the Mississippi under General Halleck, until May 2, 1862, when he was ordered to report in person to the Surgeon General and was assigned to duty as Attending Surgeon to officers and their families in Washington, D. C.

On February 9, 1863, he was appointed Lieutenant Colonel and Medical Inspector, and was assigned to duty in the Middle Department, with station at Washington. He was appointed Colonel and Medical Inspector General, August 10, 1863.

On September 3, 1863, under the provisions of the Act of July 4, 1836, he "was empowered to take charge of the Bureau of the Medical Department of the Army, and to perform the duties of the Surgeon General during the absence of that officer," and on September 4, 1863, entered upon the duties of Acting Surgeon General.

On August 22, 1864, he was appointed Surgeon General, with the rank of Brigadier General.

On March 13, 1865, he was appointed Major General by brevet for faithful and meritorious services during the war.

On June 30, 1882, after over forty-three years of continuous service he was placed upon the retired list by operation of law.

The active service of General Barnes in the field and on the frontier was unusually extensive and varied; his record in this respect, comparing favorably with that of any medical officer of the Army.

His first military duty in Florida during the disastrous Seminole War, brought him face to face with the difficulties, hardships and dangers of Indian warfare amid the deadly swamps and everglades of that inhospitable region.

In the war with Mexico his field service dates from the first movements of the "Army of Occupation," and ends with the final triumph—the capture of the City of Mexico.

Throughout these campaigns he was conspicuous for his close attention to duty, while his coolness in danger, his professional skill and sound judgment commanded for him the respect, confidence and affection of those under his charge.

Early in his career his promptness, decision and ability attracted the attention of General Twiggs, a close observer, who predicted that, should he live, he would attain the highest place of honor in his Department.

His army life in Texas, on the great plains, and on the Pacific coast, afforded him still wider opportunities for observation, experience and education, the value of which his bright and observant mind was quick to understand and appreciate.

This training of twenty years, under all conditions of military life, formed and disciplined his mind, matured his judgment, and proved a fitting foundation for the superstructure of his after successes.

In the early days of the late War, General Barnes came naturally to the front, well prepared to take an active and intelligent part in the events of that period.

It was at this time that he fell under the observation of Mr. Stanton, then Secretary of War, who discovered in him the qualities essential to the energetic and successful administration of the important duties of the Medical Department of the Army.

Once assured of the correctness of his conclusions, Secretary Stanton used his powerful influence to place him at the head of the Medical Bureau, and gave him his full confidence in all matters pertaining to its administration.

In the strong, life-long friendship which existed between the Secretary and General Barnes we find the source of that influence, which proved so beneficial to the welfare of the Medical Department, and which was especially exemplified in the determination of the independent status of General Hospitals in time of war, and in the removal of Hospital transportation, both by sea and land, from any interference from other than medical authority.

How thoroughly this influence was appreciated by General Barnes may be seen in the following tribute to the Secretary in his Annual Report for 1866:

"It is a matter of just pride and congratulation to the Medical profession throughout the civilized world, that your deep interest in the health and hygienic condition of the Army, your constant vigilance and most liberal assistance in all that could in any manner conduce to the greater comfort and welfare of the sick and wounded, and your official recognition of faithful and meritorious services of officers of this Department, have been responded to on their part by redoubled exertions, unflinching devotion to duty, and an *esprit du corps* that secures to it professional talent of the highest order.

Letters from most eminent surgeons and physicians in Europe, in acknowledgment of the publications from this Office, do not express more astonishment at the magnitude of the war, than admiration of the unvarying support and encouragement extended to the Medical Staff under your administration of the War Department."

In his official character he was clear-sighted, prompt and decisive; punctiliously attentive to the duties of his Office and

thoroughly acquainted with the necessities of his Department. Under his administration the Medical Department of the Army attained a high degree of discipline and efficiency, and may, to-day, be considered one of the best organized and best supplied of any similar department in the world.

To his personal influence with Mr. Stanton we are largely indebted for the successful establishment of the Army Medical Museum, the valuable Library of the Surgeon General's Office, the compilation of the Medical and Surgical History of the War and for many other publications of a professional nature, which, from time to time, have been issued under his direction: works which have reflected great credit upon the Army Medical Department, and for which the medical profession of this and other civilized countries owes him a lasting debt of gratitude.

The same qualities which enabled him to administer with success his own Department made him equally prominent in positions of public trust; for many years he was a trustee of the Peabody Education Fund; a Commissioner of the Soldiers' Home; a Visitor to the Government Hospital for the Insane and to the Columbia Hospital for Women. He was also connected with equally responsible trusts of a private nature.

In his profession, General Barnes attained an enviable eminence as a skillful surgeon and physician.

He possessed quick perception, sound judgment, and a mind fertile in expedients. His unwearying attention and kindly sympathy in the sick-room, won for him the confidence of his patients, which he ever after retained; especially was this the case with the soldiers of the commands with which he had served; in their devotion and remembrance he found his most satisfactory reward.

His professional aid and counsel was sought at the bedside of two dying Presidents.

In the case of President Lincoln the deadly bullet of the assassin left no hope for help from the Surgeons' art.

In the sad circumstances attending the illness and death of President Garfield, he was one of the number of distinguished surgeons, who, through the long weeks of that protracted and painful case, faithfully, assiduously and anxiously watched and nursed the sufferer, leaving untried no efforts to avert the fate which from the first seemed inevitable.

In the case of Secretary Seward, one of the intended victims in the scheme of assassination of 1865, he had, as consulting surgeon, the happiness of seeing him restored to health and years of usefulness, through skillful and prudent treatment.

In appreciation of the value of his services to the medical world, as the Head of the Army Medical Department, he was elected an honorary fellow of the Medical Society of London;

A foreign corresponding member of the Academy of Medicine, Paris;

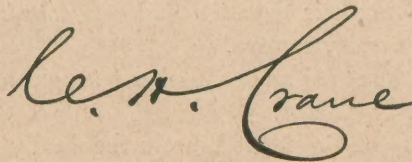
An honorary member of the Royal Academy of Medicine of Belgium;

A corresponding member of the Physico-Medical Society of Würzburg, Germany;

An honorary member of the Physico-Medical Society of the Imperial University of Moscow, and an honorary member of the Medical Society of the Caucasus.

In the Autumn of 1881, previous to his retirement from active service, his health gave evidences of failure, undoubtedly due to protracted care, anxiety and confinement during the illness of President Garfield, but it was not until after his retirement that the chronic renal disease which resulted in his death became apparent.

He was buried in Oak-Hill Cemetery, Georgetown, D. C., April 7, 1883, with the military honors befitting his rank.



Surgeon General, U. S. Army.